

Connecting the Dots: Wildfire, Forest Health, and Sustainable Rural Economies

**Notes from the Webposium Cameron Park Regional Discussion
October 29th, 2009**

Hosted by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

CAMERON PARK

Attendees:

- Kathy Hardy - Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Stephanie Lucerno - Indian Dispute Resolution Services
- Danny Marquis - Natural Resource Conservation Service:
- John Moore:
- Mary
- Susie Kocher - UC Cooperative Extension

1. From the morning panel discussions, what resonated for you?

- The diverse interests and collaboration represented on the panels, I hope it continues.
- That the speakers acknowledge the complexities of ecosystems and recognized that there may be unintended consequences
- That there seemed to be some consensus on the need for action since prevention through fuel reduction is only common sense and less expensive.
- The need to define renewable energy.
- The need to agree on what terms mean and what the problems mean locally and then move on to regional solutions
- No tribal organization was represented today on the panels.

2. What is your vision of success?

- Reinvestment in the private forest industry.
- More balanced/flexible regulations such as (e.g. AB1076)
- The ability to have more prescribed fires and smoke in the air
- Being able to utilize existing infrastructure (closed SPI mill at Camino) and build on it
- Training and reintroducing workers' skills for forest, wood products jobs
- Incentives and new ideas to support carbon tradeoffs.

3. What is our "starting point for action"?

- We need common understandings and definitions, especially of 'forest health' to include a diverse self-sustaining landscape using restoration forestry and less fossil fuel inputs.
- Projects must be socially acceptable and financially viable
- Projects should avoid not only fire impacts but ecological impacts too
- We need more education and outreach such as that available through the El Dorado Forest Forum which meets monthly regarding forest issues in El Dorado and Amador counties and Project Learning Tree educational workshops
- We need to better understand the impact of development and structures when planning firebreaks

4. What are the barriers or hurdles to overcome?

- Air pollution regulations and barriers to prescribed fire

- Little public understanding about humans as active agents in management, now and historically. Leaving forests alone is not the best option.
- New strategies are needed to adapt our forests to a changing climate.

5. What level of planning needs to go into these goal/activities?

- We need more input from SPI staff that have been affected by regulations - we need some relationships to help learn from them

6. What projects are going on currently or in the past? What are the reasons for success or failure of a biomass facility nearby? What is the potential for establishment of a new local biomass or wood products facility? Participants did not know the full extent of projects in the area besides the SPI mill in Camino that had recently closed. There is hope that this facility will reopen soon if the economy bounces back. Other potential facilities could include those that utilize small wood for products such as:

- Shavings, pellets, bricks
- Marketing this, pet supplies bedding etc
- Biomass, energy, transportation

7. Who here today can contribute to developing local collaboration?

Participants were interested in further collaboration but felt some key stakeholders were missing.

8. Who is missing from today's discussion?

- Tribal representatives with local knowledge
- El Dorado Fire Safe Council & branches
- The El Dorado County RCD, they have technical and planning staff and can also receive state funding (prop 40).
- Farm Bureau, they have funding for landowners to implement projects.
- US Forest Service.

9. What are the next steps?

- Develop a regular discussion quarterly semi annual etc to discuss issues
- Follow up meeting to this, based on what happened here, and next steps.
- More intense local networking
- Involve the Resource Conservation Districts.
- Involve local legislative contacts including the County Board of Supervisors and city councils
- Offer teleconferencing options for busy people
- Hold next meeting closer to the forest
- Partner with a local organization like the RCD to get the right people to attend.

Unanswered questions:

- For Panel Member Jim McKinney - Isn't it more efficient to just burn biomass for electricity and plug in an electric car rather than turn it into a liquid fuel?